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To
Mrs Carrie Jenkins Harris,
from
Walter W. Lenoir,
Lenoir,
North Carolina

HAND IN HAND

THROUGH THE HAPPY VALLEY.

BY

MRS. J. A. OERTEL.

PUBLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF

THE CHILDREN'S WARD, ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL,

CHURCH CHARITY FOUNDATION,

BROOKLYN, L. I.

1881.

TO MY SWEET SISTER

IN CHRIST,

UPON WHOSE GENTLE HEAD

GOD SET THIS GOLDEN CROWN OF

MOTHERHOOD,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS LOVINGLY

DEDICATED.

79627

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet;
Oh, the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Yet it was not that nature had shed o'er the scene,
Her purest of chrystal and brightest of green;
'Twas not the soft magic of streamlet or hill,
Oh! no,—it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the belov'd of my bosom were near,
Who made every scene of enchantment more dear:
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest,
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms which we feel in this cold world would cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

THE HAPPY VALLEY.

"It is warm in that green valley,
Vale of childhood, where you dwell,
It is calm in that green valley,
Round whose bournes such great hills swell."

IN the beautiful Piedmont region of Western North Carolina, where the foot hills lie nestling at the base of the Blue Ridge, a stretch of valley, four or five miles in extent, bordering the yet infant Yadkin, is known as the "Happy Valley."

On either side the mountains rise and fall in wavy, picturesque outline, rugged and wild, with faces scarred by tempests and the blackened tracks of the fire fiend that so often sweeps destructively up and down their steeps. They stand in their native, uncultured wildness, in sharp contrast with the lovely scene in the vale below.

The bottom lands of this valley are luxuriantly rich. In their season the broad fields of wavy grain, heavy with the golden harvest, and the ranks of stately corn, with its broad, dark green leaves covering the full strong ears, bring to mind the exclamation of the Psalmist, "The valleys shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing."

As one approaches from the south the route lies over the Green Mountain. By the gradual ascent of a graded road the top at last is reached, and winding through a gap the descent immediately commences. Just on the summit a mystical mound, circular in form, with a depression in the middle, supposed to be the resting place of some of the dusky warriors, who in the olden time made these cliffs resound with the war-whoop and song, gives a name to the locality. It is known as the "Indian Grave Gap." The road is the oldest in the county, having been travelled long before this section was inhabited.

"Half drowned in sleepy peace it lay,
As satiate with the boundless play
Of sunshine in its green array,
And clear cut hills of purple hue.
To keep it safe, rose up behind,
As with a charmed ring to bind
The grassy sea, where clouds might find
A place to bring their shadows to."

The first view of this valley, as it spreads out before the eye of the traveller as he emerges from the woods, is sure to call forth feelings of unbounded admiration. The one pervading sentiment of this lovely spot is that of *peace.* The sunlight seems to lie so lovingly on these fields and to bathe them with its richest gold. Bird voices fill the air all the day, and when night throws a deeper repose over the landscape, the plaintive voice of the whippor-will, comes in with its minor strain to make the silence and quietude as it were audible.

In the midst sparkles and dances on the merry Yadkin, fresh from its mountain birthplace. It is still so small that it may be forded in places, is a bright, clear stream, and sings joyfully as it flows past, on its long way to the

throbbing sea. Its course amid the wheat and corn fields is strongly marked, by the fringes of shrub and tree growth upon its borders, and there is also a realization of that charming picture of the poet, "That vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet."

With graceful curve and sweep the ice-cold waters of Buffalo creek join themselves to the Yadkin. It flows down through a most romantic gorge, the high banks on each side heavily wooded, shading the water from the sunlight which has already tempered the Yadkin in its flow, as it basks in the sun-rays in its course through the valley. Many a dignified laurel blossom has bowed and nodded demurely at the reflection of its own rosy face in the mirror-like stream, and lovely ferns sport their delicate fronds coquettishly at the waters' edge.

A most picturesque mill stands upon this creek, just before the "meeting of the waters" takes place. Its surroundings are wildly beautiful; hoary rocks, giant trees, and an undergrowth of exquisite variety and luxuriance combine to produce a rare artistic effect, and the loneliness touches one like poetry. It

is fresh, free nature, in her loveliest mood, ready to hold converse with the heart whose chords are tuned in sympathy.

Here every season has its peculiar charms. The spring-tide comes so daintily, robed in the tenderest harmonies of color ; the yellow, red, green and gray, through all their most subtile gradations, as the young leafage puts forth from the myriad varieties of growth, and on every hillside, in every nook, and scattered broadcast over the meadows, the trailing arbutus, the violets, and all the early sisterhood of lovely flowrets, stand ready with their perfumed breath, to whisper winning words of God and love.

The summer advances with wealth of greenery, piled up, piled up ;—one feels as if a faded leaf could never more be known on earth, so full and perfect does everything appear. The skies are the purest azure, and the air, purple, velvety, not a dim haze veiling aught from sight, but transparent, yet softening the nearest objects. Then the gardens teem with the full-bosomed, glowing roses, and the humming

of the bees alone breaks in upon the drowsy stillness.

But to one who has an eye for bold, vivid coloring, this valley in the autumn is a very Paradise ; scarlet, crimson, maroon, orange, yellow and brown stand sharp against each other, blazing up the mountain sides, and covering their tops with glory, all intensified by the intermixture of the emerald-green pine.

As the spring suggests the thought of a gentle maiden attired for a May day festival in pale blooms, the autumn steps down the vale like a haughty brunette, her hair bedecked with scarlet, her proud form arrayed in gorgeous colors, and her passionate heart-throbs suffusing her rounded cheeks with richest damask.

Even old winter lays his hand right gently here. When the snow covers all, as it does sometimes, one does not think of death, as is generally the wont, but as of a child in its spotless bed, smiling in sweet sleep at pleasant dreams.

Likewise with the rising and the setting of the sun each day. In the morning all the

eastern slope reposes in cool, dense shadow, while the range of mountains that lie along the west, flame and blush with the first kisses of the sun, and as the day declines the shadows fall where the rosy morning light has lain, and the eastern rampart glows and shimmers in the evening rays.

Two sunsets in the year are particularly noticable. Looking up the valley from old "Fort Defiance," the point at which the interest of his little narrative centres, the peculiar form of the "Table Mountain" stands, at the end of the vista, against the sky. It is an interesting and curious formation, and as seen from this side, fully merits its name. It lifts its head, perfectly square, the top flat and level, and the precipices on each side, perpendicular to the depth of three hundred feet.

On two evenings, one in the spring and one in autumn, the sun sets directly behind this mountain and seems for a few moments as it were to rest upon its summit, a very shekinah of radiance, calling up recollections of the many instances recorded in Holy Scripture of supernatural appearances on mountain tops.

And so the days and seasons come and go in the "Happy Valley." Sometimes a storm comes sweeping down, and the floods follow and spread over the fair fields, and wild peals of thunder disturb the repose of the scene; but this is the exception. The memory the traveller or visitor takes away with him, is a lingering sound of gentle voices, a vision of kindly faces surrounded by birds and flowers, and an impression of unbroken peace and beauty.

Several fine old southern homes are scattered along at intervals; homes in which the most generous cheer, dispensed with the largest hearted hospitality, was always to be found. In years gone by each house was full of young people, and growing children, the families all linked together by ties of kinship. Life there was as full of enjoyment as culture, refinement, affection, and an overflowing abundance of the good things of earth could make it.

But alas, the "Happy Valley" is only an earthly Eden, and change, the universal lot of all, has fallen upon its dwellers. The blight of war fell even here, and the tread of hostile armies broke the peaceful stillness, and left

many a bitter track behind. The young friends and relatives who grew up together, have been

> " Scattered
> Like roses in bloom;
> Some at the bridal,
> And some at the tomb."

Some laid down their lives upon the altar of their "beloved South," fighting for what they deemed the right, and were brought back from the battle fields by tender hands to sleep beneath the green sod of the valley they loved ; and the chances and changes of this mortal life have removed others far away from these cherished scenes of their childhood and youth.

Still each house is held and occupied by descendants of the former owners, and a family feeling and warm attachments bind all together. In this respect, even allowing for the many sad recollections which time has gathered there, it is still the "*Happy* Valley."

"A brave old house! A garden full of bees,
Large dropping poppies, and queen hollyhocks,
With butterflies for crowns,—tree peonies
And pinks and goldilocks."

THE home to which I would lead my readers is known by the very belligerent and bristling cognomen of "Fort Defiance." The name is far however from giving any idea of the spirit which pervades it, or its inmates; but is derived from an old fort of that name which in the early history of our country did service in the line of defence erected against the Indians. It was located here just behind the spot where the residence stands, upon the edge of a steep set off, at the foot of which a creek flows. The former site of the fort is now the graveyard; where a goodly family group, members of four generations, are quietly waiting for the resurrection.

A strange fascination clings about this curious old house. It is so quaint in construction, and the air about it seems so thick with memories, that one cannot help loving it, though the hand of Time, and his faithful follower, Decay, has been laid so heavily upon it, that it is neither as cheerful or comfortable as it used to be.

In the centre of the building a spacious room running through the entire house, from which a stairway with heavy oaken bannisters leads up to the second floor, is called "The Hall." A large fire-place, with pannelled work above and around it, fills up one end. In the corner the grim old clock stands, ruthlessly ticking away the hours, and days, and years—ticking slowly, solemnly,—as if it had upon its beating heart a remembrance of the many lives it has seen come and go in this old home, whose hours of birth and death have been numbered from its dial. As if it had gained through all these years, watching the fleeting human shadows which have passed before it, a sense of its own steadfastness, and of the importance of its mission.

It takes up at times strange voices. Sometimes with monotonous exactness it seems to say, "Coming—going—coming—going." Again every stroke of the unwearied pendulum says "Gone—gone—gone—gone." It is not always sad, however, for ever and anon there comes a period when it calls out, "Happy—happy—happy—happy," — or, "Praise—the Lord—Praise—the Lord."

It is as it were the heart of the mansion, and sensitive to the influence of every light and shadow that passes over it, while it regulates the movements of the active life within, a life that must be ever active, no matter who comes or goes.

This "Hall" has been largely used as a dining apartment, although the family dining-room at present is to the right of it. If its walls could speak, what tales they could tell of merry times in the long ago: of the family reunions, of the Christmas dinners, the birth-days and the wedding feasts! The antique sideboard, which has so often groaned beneath the weight of the farm-house dainties piled upon it, still keeps its place near the old clock; there seems

to be a kind of comradeship between them, as if they could say, "you and I," to each other, and a sort of stately, old-time spirit lingers about them both.

There are doors, front and back, leading from the "Hall" into the open air.

Behind the smaller dining-room is a bed-chamber, and from it a second stairway leads to a suite of rooms above; from which again a stairway rises to the old garret, a perfect curiosity shop in its way, being filled with all the parapharnalia, the waifs and strays of a family life a century old.

To the left of the "Hall" is the parlor with a room attached to it, and a third stairway enclosed and winding, with odd little drawers in the wall all up the sides. There is no connection between this parlor part of the house and the rest, except by way of the piazza, which stretches the whole length of the house, festooned with trailing vines, grapes and roses. Neither is there any connection on the second floor between the apartments to which the three separate stairways lead. The modern ideas of convenience find no place here in this respect,

for it is necessary in order to go from one room to another just beside it, to come down stairs, go out on the porch, and up another stairway. The kitchen and servants' rooms are detached from the house, as is the usual custom in the South.

> "Roses either side the door, are
> Growing lithe and tall,
> Each one set, a summer warder,
> For the keeping of the hall—
> With a red rose, and a white rose,
> Leaning, nodding at the wall."

From the central door a wide walk leads out through the garden. It is bordered on each side with spacious beds of flowers, that seem to flourish here as nowhere else. It often appears as if flowers, like children, can recognize those who are their friends, and are ready to respond to the sympathetic touch of kindly fingers. Surely never any where else do leaves unfold and buds bloom where they meet with such a gracious, loving welcome as here.

All the sweet old-fashioned flowers find plenty of room. The old spicy pink, the sweet william, tulips and hyacinths, the fragrant,

single-white being the family favorite, the hollyhocks, the jump-up-johnnies, the blue cornflowers, sweet peas and poppies, and great clumps of annunciation lilies are not crowded out, though they stand in close proximity to many, very many of the new and more pretentious, though generally less fragrant blossoms; and in winter the cold-pit is full of the newest triumphs of floriculture. As the "sweet mother" wrote, "I wish you could see our pit. It is perfectly ablaze with flowers. The laurestinus you recommended has been a pyramid of bloom all the season, and delighted us all with its delicious perfume; the calla, too, has five splendid lilies out now."

At the end of this walk is a secluded nook, covered and shaded by century-old cedars, dark and cool at the hottest mid-day, and jocosely called by the family "The Lovers' Retreat." Indeed it is said that in the course of events several engagements have taken place in this romantic and cosy corner. Around the entrance roses and lilac bushes flourish, while in the early part of the day, on every side the eye is gladdened by the clean, pure faces of

the morning-glories, which run in mad riot over everything.

Of course, to those who have lived here so long, this garden is haunted ground, peopled to their loving ken with forms that others see not. Among them there is one, a

> "Little maid with wondrous eyes,
> Not afraid, but clear and tender,
> Blue, and filled with prophecies,"

as she looked dreamily out at "life's unlifted veil," whose lovely, happy life was interwoven with its flower-life, like warp and woof.

Looking out beyond the garden bounds, on to the mountains, green pastures, rich harvest fields, and quiet solemn woodlands lie.

To the right the ground descends rapidly to the same little stream of water before spoken of as running down below the family burying ground. It flows through the barn-yard, giving drink, bright and fresh and clear, to the many full-uddered cows gathered therein. It is like a sweet idyl—

"The lovely laughter of the wind-swept wheat,
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill,
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet,
And wade and drink their fill."

Beside this stream there stands several large old beech trees, with great overhanging branches, and the white roots, with their multitudinous arms stretched and intertwined in the most fantastic way. They have a weird, elfish look, especially by moonlight.

"On the left the sheep are cropping
The slant grass and daisies pale,
And the apple trees stand dropping
Separate shadows toward the vale;
Over which, in choral silence,
The hills look you their 'All Hail!'"

Just behind the house, between it and the garden, stands a huge catalpa tree. The old giant has basked in many a summer sun, and braved many a storm, and is now yielding to the gnawing tooth of time. An aged grape vine throws its snake-like form up the trunk and around its branches, and gracefully intertwines its leaves and sprays with the large, plain leaves of the tree. Near its base is a

hole decayed in the trunk, where a huge limb has broken off, in which a hen once made her nest and hatched a volunteer brood of chickens.

Through how many experiences and changes the old tree has watched beside the mansion! Its leaves have clapped their hands and rippled with laughter at the frolics of the young and gay who so enjoyed a sojourn here, and when the pall of sadness has fallen upon the old home, the winds have sighed a requiem through its branches.

Several smaller houses are grouped about, in one of which stands the loom, where wondrously fine fabrics are woven by hand. Not only the jeans and linseys of the country, but fine dimities, and table and bed linen; also tasteful carpets. Though in these days of steam machinery, goods could probably be bought cheaper than they can be thus manufactured at home, and very much trouble saved by it, still so many of the poor people around have been in the habit of depending on the old home for their subsistence in these various industries, that the gentle mistress feels it her

duty to keep up the old customs, though it is oftimes a tax upon her strength and energies almost beyond their powers of endurance.

In front of the house is a row of grand old spruce pines. They are yet strong and vigorous, and are magnificent in form, and solemn and stately in their intensely dark green foliage. One of them was riven from top to bottom by a thunderbolt a few years since.

The mansion was built by Gen. William Lenoir, nearly one hundred years ago, the work of construction being commenced about 1785. It was a laborious undertaking in those days. The frame is of heavy oaken timber, and still in a state of excellent preservation. Gen. Lenoir at that time lived in a smaller house on the opposite side of the river. The nails were made by hand, by the blacksmith on his plantation, and the most of the lumber was sawed with a whip saw.

The cornice, which still adorns the eaves, and the looking-glasses, were ordered from Liverpool. They were received at the port of Charleston, and hauled all the long way in road wagons.

He was born in Virginia. His father was a French Huguenot, a sea captain, and owner of his own vessel. It went down in the raging waters, carrying the gallant captain with it to a seaman's grave.

He was rather a stern man, of dignified demeanor, but it has been said of him that in his intercourse with women his manners were like those of the knights of the olden time, and he was exceedingly kind to the poor. His doors were always open to receive the traveller, as there were no taverns in the country in those primitive days. Perhaps the best account that could be given of his life is contained in the epitaph upon his tombstone. This is more elaborate than his family would have wished, but the stone was ordered from the eastern part of the State, as such a thing could not, of course, be obtained in the mountains, and the matter of the inscription was left to some of his friends, his associates in public life. This is their estimate of him, and their tribute to his memory.

HERE LIES
All that is mortal of
WILLIAM LENOIR.
Born, May 8th, 1751.
Died, May 6th, 1839.

"In the times that tried men's souls he was a genuine Whig.

"As a lieutenant under Rutherford and Williams, in 1776, and as a captain under Cleaveland at King's Mountain, he proved himself a brave soldier. Although a native of another State, yet North Carolina was proud of him as her adopted son. In her service he filled the several offices of Major-General of the Militia, President of the Council of State, member of both houses of the Legislature, Speaker of the Senate, First President of the Board of Trustees of the University, and for 60 years Justice of the Peace, and Chairman of the Court of Common Pleas. In all these high public trusts he was found faithful. In private life he was no less distinguished as an affectionate husband, a kind father and a warm-hearted friend. The traveller will long remember his hospitality, and the poor bless him as their benefactor. Of such a man it may truly be said that his highest eulogy is the record of his deeds."

A very interesting incident in connection with the battle of Kings Mountain is related by the family.

When the call came for recruits, as Major

Ferguson, of the British army, was coming up the country with his command, intending to embody and organize the Loyalists beyond the Wateree and Broad Rivers, and to intercept the mountain men who were retreating from Camden, every man who had a horse started for the scene of action. William Lenoir was then living in Wilkes Co., and joined the forces under Cleaveland. He was made a captain, and his two friends, Herndon, and Jesse Franklin, afterward Governor of the State, had also some official appointments. These three made a compact together that they would stand by and succor each other in whatever circumstances they might be placed.

As the command was going up the mountain, there came a man beckoning and calling, "Back, back!" and he pointed out another way which they took, and that proved to have been the only way by which Ferguson could have escaped. The man was quite unknown, had never been seen by any of them before, and was never seen afterwards. Gen. Lenoir always said it was a providential interference; that it was God's will that the federal

forces should be triumphant, and so He led them by the right way to cut off the enemy's only chance of escape.

There is also treasured up in the old home an English officer's sword, that Gen. Lenoir picked up and brought home with him from the battle field. It has a fine keen blade, upon which is engraved this legend, in Spanish:

> "Draw me not without reason,
> Sheathe me not without honor."

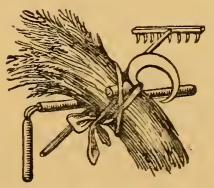
His wife was of an aristocratic English family, and a thorough Churchwoman. She was so situated in life that she was cut off from all Church association. But though true to her Church, and never uniting with any of the denominations around her, she had a large and loving heart, full of generous impulses, giving out its affection to all who called themselves Christian. She was so amiable and good that her children used to say, "Mother not only forgives an injury, but really and truly forgets."

She was a cripple, and walked on crutches for the last ten years of her life; but she was always contented and cheerful.

A grandson of this worthy couple is now the owner of the venerable home. Many a time has the question of building a new house and pulling down the old one been discussed; but as desirable as the new one appears to be, when it comes to look the matter of tearing away the old roof-tree squarely in the face, all shrink from it. So it stands on. Angels have come and gone from its doors many a time before, but now it has been flooded anew with glory, freshly consecrated, made as it were a place of transfiguration, a spot where sinful mortals might well take off the shoes from their feet, feeling that the place is indeed holy ground.

A calm silence reigns in the household, and two pictured faces upon the wall alone tell of the gentle souls that have departed: but they left behind them a track of light, leading the desolated hearts up from the beautiful Valley to the city of Jerusalem the Golden; from the dear old home so weather-worn and decaying, to the "one only mansion, the Paradise of joy."

"Jesus in mercy bring us,
To that dear land of rest,
Who art with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest."



"Face and figure of a child—
Though too calm, you think, and tender,
For the childhood you would lend her.

"Yet child simple, undefiled,
Frank, obedient—waiting still,
On the turnings of your will;

"And her smile it seems half holy,
As if drawn from thoughts more far
Than our common jestings are.

"And if any poet knew her,
He would think of her with falls
Used in lovely madrigals.

"And if reader read the poem,
He would whisper—'You have done a
Consecrated little Una.'"

THE VALLEY OF LIFE.

"There are buds that fold within them,
Closed and covered from our sight,
Many a richly-tinted petal,
Never looked on by the light:

Fain to see their shrouded faces,
Sun and dew are long at strife,
Till at length the sweet buds open—
Such a bud is life."

IN the fondly cherished old home of which we have spoken, three little fair-headed boys had already gathered around the hearthstone, when upon the 15th of December, 1866, the blue eyes of a little daughter opened to light and life. It was a welcome, precious gift, and was received with joy and thankfulness.

The little one grew on, gaining in strength and beauty until on the 26th of June, 1867, she was presented for Holy Baptism. She was given the name of Louisa Avery, the maiden name

of her papa's sainted mother, which was abbreviated in the household parlance to Loula.

Her "sweet mother," whose confirmation took place the same day, says of her — "I never gave a child to the dear Lord more heartily."

It was an interesting scene, as the venerable Bishop, himself, looking all an apostle with his stately presence, and who always comes to these scattered sheep, with so much of tenderness and fatherly affection, took her in his arms.

She went to him with evident pleasure, and as the Holy Rite proceeded, she looked up lovingly into the Bishop's face, and patted his cheek caressingly. When he poured the water over the fair baby brow, she clapped her tiny hands and shouted aloud, as if she had already gained the victory.

Can it be that attendant spirits whispered of the sunny life and radiant death that awaited her, that she should seem thus exultant at the starting point of her Christian career.

As the months rolled by in her little life, slowly gathering into years, she increased in

loveliness. She had wide open eyes, and a self-poised, fearless nature, from her earliest infancy. She never was afraid of any one, would go to any kindly hand outstretched to take her, was never cross or fretful, and gave very little trouble, and a great deal of comfort. Good health and her mental characteristics combined to make her a veritable sunbeam in the household, a well-spring of delight to all about her.

She even in her earliest days showed indications of the gentle consideration for others which was a marked feature of her individuality all through her life.

It is related of her that when she was about ten months old, her papa had a number of hands on the place, moving a house. The nurse walked out with the babe to see what was going on, and to watch the operations of the workmen, all white, save one good old black man.

They all noticed the lovely child, and came and talked to her, and then kissed her. She kissed them all willingly until she came to the black man, and then she drew back, but at

once she seemed to feel that her refusal might give him pain, and to show her good will and that she was sorry about it, she put both her little hands on his face and tenderly stroked it.

She always manifested this thoughtfulness both in joy and sorrow. Even her pet animals were not overlooked. She desired sympathy herself and she wanted to sympathize with every living thing.

Once, soon after she began to walk and talk, she saw her uncle coming, of whom she was very fond. She ran fast as she could to meet him, but seeing her pet cat running too, she stopped a moment to put her arms around his neck and say—"Tom, Wallie has tum—is you gad?" And then she went on so cheerily, all the happier that she had not overlooked poor pussie, in her own delight. It was no wonder that the affectionate cheerful little creature, became so inexpressibly dear, not only to the family circle, but to relatives and neighbors, to all indeed who knew her.

Early in the spring of 1869, God sent the little sister who was henceforth to be the joy

of her life. This babe was of quite a different type, of an exceedingly delicate, nervous organization, sensitive and shy in an uncommon degree. She was quite a contrast to the brave baby Loula.

The rector of the parish baptized her, July 18th, 1869, by the name of Elizabeth, which was soon contracted to Bessie or Bess.

The dear lamb behaved very sweetly, making no objection when the rector took her in his arms, and smiled when the sin-cleansing waters flowed over her forehead and she was signed as one of Christ's flock. Truly the "Seal of Heaven" was on both of these little ones "from their birth." That all must allow who can look back, and see them as they walked hand in hand through life's valley, the peace of God in their hearts, and the silver cross, the mark of the redeemed, always shining to angel ken, upon their fair white brows.

In her babyhood the little Bessie was a perfect mimosa plant, shrinking from the touch of even the friendliest hand that was not of the home circle. No entreaty, no playful wile could tempt her from her mother's arms.

After all plans that ingenuity could invent had been tested, one would be obliged to leave her there, where only she appeared perfectly at rest, with her head lying on her mother's shoulder, nestled closely, looking shyly out at you from her half-veiled eyes, the long dark lashes probably moistened with tears; and though one could not but love the tender little creature, still this peculiarity prevented her from being such a general favorite as the frank, merry Loula.

The first years of her life, her nerves being so excitable, it followed in natural consequence that her health was uncertain, and the frail delicate blossom needed watchful and ever fostering care. She loved all her home folks, but the dear mother and little sister were the tiny baby's special delight — to rest in the arms of one, and watch the gambols of the other, her state of entire satisfaction and enjoyment. And so their gentle lives rolled on until they grew large enough to play out of doors, when a new world of happiness was opened to them in the flower-life of the dear old garden, and with which they became so

identified, Loula especially, that recollections of them are indissolubly interwoven with each plant and bush and fragrant bloom.

Gradually Bessie gained in strength, and they were so very happy together at their innocent play; though, through her earlier years, she always liked to keep the "sweet mother" in sight if possible. They were not at any time of their lives, or in any sense like the morbid, prematurely wise children we read of; they were just like other children except in an under current of religious feeling, which was certainly remarkable.

They were trained as soon as they could understand, to know and believe that they were God's children, Christian children by virtue of their baptism, signed and sealed to His loving service, and they always rested in that belief. Probably no shadow of a doubt ever crossed their minds but that they were in very truth and reality the lambs of the Good Shepherd.

They were led daily to bow upon their knees, and make their wants known to their Heavenly Father, and they loved to pray. Although

living in such an isolated position that they were deprived of the educating influence of the continued services of the Church, service being held in the Valley only once in each month, still they were kept in constant remembrance of the teachings of the Church; as the "sweet mother" every Lord's Day, with her boys around her, went over the Psalter and Lessons and Catechism, doing all that could be done to make up for the want of sanctuary privileges which she so deeply deplored; taking for them the Church papers, making them soldiers of Dr. Twing's "Army," keeping the mite chest in sight, and celebrating with them the festivals of the Holy Year. They took great interest in the sufferings and patience of "Doris," and were loving and frequent contributors to the "Churchman's Cot."

It was a touching sight and a fearful reproof to those who live so neglectfully within sound of the church bells, to see how a church life was maintained in this home, so far away in this quiet valley. And the Great Head of the Church has accepted and blessed the effort, in showing what a gracious influence the training

exerted on these little ones, giving to them, even in their early years, fully rounded and healthily developed Christian characters.

There are surely no ways so certain in their final ending as the paths laid out for little feet to walk in by the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church. Would not the germ of spiritual life imparted at Baptism, grow and flourish and bring forth fruit with more certainty, if mothers felt their responsibility more earnestly, and kept day by day closely in the good old ways, as they lead their little ones on in the paths of Christian duty?

These darlings too, by the circumstances that surrounded them, were cut off from the contaminating influences of society. Their lives were pure and bright as that of the birds that flitted and sang around them; they knew nothing of the feverish excitements that sap out the physical vitality of city children, and brush the lovely purple bloom from off the fruit of their lives. Fashion, late hours, and glare of gas, were all unknown to them. They knew no pleasures but such as were life-giving to soul and body. The light in which they revelled, was that of

God's blessed sunshine; their laces and jewels were buds and flowers, and their dance the gay romp on the green grass, with the bird voices for music. Ah, was not the life path for them indeed laid through a Happy Valley?

As Loula grew she developed the most intense love for flowers; they appeared to be living things to her; she drank in their spirit and understood the sentiments they breathed. She would stand with dreamy eyes gazing upon a pure white lily, or would seem to be touched with a rapturous exstacy by the crimson petals of a rose—and again she would laugh and shout in merry glee at the quaint faces of the pansies or the funny little hooded visages of the sweet peas. One could fancy that like "Eva the sinless child" of the old poem, she saw the flower spirits and lived and loved and laughed and talked with them.

She flitted about the garden like a humming bird, searching around every plant and bush, and was the first to spy a new bud coming, or a flower unfolded, and then she would come bounding in the house with the intelligence, her clear bright eyes aglow with pleasure, and

some one had to go out to enjoy the new-found treasure with her.

In the spring of 1873 the "sweet mother" being very much out of health, she went to pass some time at her father's house at E——, and be under the care of a physician there. Loula was at this time a little more than six years old, and accompanied her mother and cousin, while four-year-old Bessie was left at home in the care of her loving auntie.

They feared the little one would grieve overmuch, but she did not. She attached herself closely to her papa, following him everywhere, would expect him to carry her where the way was too long or too rough for little feet, and was particularly delighted at being set upon the plough when the men were ploughing.

Her papa put a little calf in the yard for her amusement, and in playing with it she took the greatest satisfaction. She talked to it as if it were another child, and the animal became devoted to the frail little girl. This calf was sent, as is the custom in that section, up to the mountain pastures for the summer. Here it ran for months and became very wild, but when it

was brought home again in the autumn it recognized its playmate of the spring-time, and was entirely gentle to her, letting her lead it about wherever she wished.

The visit to E——, the companionship of the several families of little cousins, and the many delights that a child always finds in the home of its grandparents, Lulu enjoyed to the full ; but amid all she found work to do for her dear Saviour.

While she was staying at the house of her aunt, a little boy, a child of one of the tenants on the place, would persist in coming in the yard to play with Loula and her cousins. He was a fine stout-looking child, but very bad and disobedient. He was forbidden to come there, but he was determined to be with Loula, and no commands of Mrs. C——, the lady of the house, or threats from his mother, could keep him away.

Loula was always gentle and kind to him, and although her mother had every confidence in her little girl, still she could not help, knowing what a naughty child he was, feeling somewhat worried at their being so much together.

Day after day they would go away together for a time, the family knew not where, until finally Loula's mamma sent her cousin L—— to seek for them and see what they were doing. After some search she heard their voices in a room in a distant corner of the house. She listened quietly to hear what they were talking about, and she heard Loula telling poor little Jim about the blessed Jesus, how He came down from His beautiful home, how He lived with the people in this world, how He loved little children if they were good, and how He died.—Jim listened as if entranced while she so sweetly and earnestly told him the old, old story.

Of course, the listener withdrew and left the child to her saintly work. Still day after day he came, and they went away together, doubtless to recount the same beautiful story over and over again. No one spoke to Loula about it. She however told her mother one day that poor little Jim never heard of Jesus until she told him of Him.

After they returned home, they received news of his sudden death. He died of croup after a

very short illness. Loula seemed so very glad and thankful that she had done what she could for the ignorant child, and said with much pleasure, "Mother, I am *so* glad I told him about Jesus, and that I read to him in that little "Peep of Day" book at aunty's, about God."

During this sojourn at E——, she was invited by two of her cousins to a dolls' tea party. The mother of the little cousins had baked cakes for them, and the table was very prettily set out. After they had taken their seats, and all was settled in order, the little girls began, taking pattern probably from what they had heard older folks say on similar occasions, to apologize for their cakes, and other things, finding fault with them, wishing they were better, and the like expressions. Loula seemed troubled, and said in her sweet direct way, "Oh, I think it is all so nice;" and then, the tears coming in her blue eyes, in the midst of all her happiness, she said, "Just think, there are so many poor little children who would be so glad to get these good things, who never have anything like it in all their lives."

These incidents show her tender feeling for

others less favored than herself, both in temporal and spiritual things ; always thoughtful of others, always unconscious of self. This perfect forgetfulness of herself was a marked characteristic, and it gave her a quiet dignity and self-possession of manner that was very charming.

On her seventh birthday her mamma gave her a little book entitled, "Heavenward Paths for Little Feet." This book was ever after her daily companion, and when her mamma was too unwell to go with her, she would take her little sister by the hand, and the two precious ones would go to their devotions, Loula reading the lessons and the prayers.

One time, not long after the book was given her, she was quite ill for a short time, and she surprised her mother, by repeating so many appropriate verses from it, when she had not the least idea the child had learned them. "Mother," she said, "the verses in my little book are very beautiful. I have been thinking of them."

"Tis Jesus sends us sickness,
So when in pain or ill,
I'll try to bear it meekly,
Because it is His will.

"I'll think of Him who suffered
Upon the cross for me,
Can I not bear a little,
My blessed Lord, for Thee?

"It is Thy love that makes me
To leave my merry play,
To lie here still and quiet,
And give up my own way.

"Lord Jesus, give me patience,
Lord Jesus, give me love,
Lord Jesus, give hereafter
A life with Thee above."

Later in the evening she said, "Mother, these verses are *so* beautiful:

"Through the night Thy Presence cheers us,
In Thy shadow may we sleep,
That no evil may come near us,
Watch let angels round us keep.

"In Thine arms, O Father, lying,
Safe and blessed may we be,
Sleeping as we would be dying,
With our faces turned to Thee."

"That is *so beautiful*, mother,

'With our faces turned to Thee.' "

Her mother was confined to her bed for many months by illness, and every day she would bring her little book to read and pray by her bedside. No matter who was in the room, she had no self-consciousness ; she went on quietly with her usual directness of aim, allowing nothing to interfere or to divert her from the performance of her duty.

There are touching reminiscences connected with her ministrations and instructions to a poor old woman, Chaney A——, who lived in a cabin on her father's plantation, and did spinning and knitting for the family.

She had been a vile sinner in her youth, and had a sad life behind her. Age was now pressing upon her, and she was making an effort for a better life, in which the gentle mistress at the "Fort" was ever ready to help her.

Loula took an especial delight in going to the lonely cabin, to take bodily comforts to the needy woman, and also to try to lead her in the ways of righteousness and truth. She

was so utterly ignorant, so untaught in spiritual things, that the little child, so calm and trustful, sat before her like a mentor.

She always took with her the little book, "Heavenward Paths," and the old woman looked for it, and asked for it. Reading from that gave her foundation for the various teachings she employed, and her old pupil grew in grace under her simple instructions.

One day her dear auntie went with her on one of these errands of love and mercy. Arriving at the cabin, she thought that Loula might be more free to talk if she left her alone, so she took the pail and went to the spring for some fresh cool water. When she returned she lingered awhile outside, and she heard Loula reading:

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" and then she added in explanation, "You know that is when we get to Heaven."

Old Chaney sat rocking back and forth and weeping. The child continued:

"And there will be no night there, either;"

"isn't that delightful?" "and there will be no pain there."

The old woman asked wonderingly, "Loula, is that so?"

Thus the precious child led the poor creature on in a contemplation of the promised joys of Heaven, and made it all seem so beautiful to her.

One of Chaney's nieces says that she was at her aunt's cabin at one time when Loula came, and that she too retired, lest she should embarrass the little girl, but that she heard her talking so sweetly she thought she must go in again, which she did, but that her presence did not seem to confuse her in the least, and that she went on reading and teaching as if no one was by. No thought of self found a place in her mind at such times; she was all absorbed in the importance of the themes of which she was reading or speaking. At this visit she also taught the old woman a beautiful little prayer, about persons in affliction, which she told her she must say every night.

This same niece also relates that at one time, when the two little girls came together to the

cabin, her aunt lay sick in bed, and when they approached her bedside she stretched out her arms and they both knelt, while she placed her toil-worn hands upon their fair young heads, and blessed them! Then Loula asked if she should read, and Bessie looked about for something to feed the cat. She found nothing eatable but some dry hard bread.

The next day they came back, and Bessie brought some meat with her from home to feed the half-starved pussie, but hid it, and called the cat aside to feed it without Chaney's knowledge, lest her feelings should be hurt that she had felt it was necessary to bring food from home for her pet.

In the parlor of the old mansion there hangs a large engraving of the Crucifixion. On one occasion Loula led old Chaney in to see it, and explained it to her, in her own peculiar way, so childlike, and yet so plain and forcible.

She gazed on the picture, and listened to the story, and it all seemed to come home to her heart and understanding; and she bowed down and wept bitterly, exclaiming, "He died for

me," while the child looked on with an expression of half wonder in her eyes.

It was a recital of that which she had known always ; it was a part of her life, interwoven with every recollection. Her life was marked and divided by Christmas, and Easter and Trinity, her weeks by the ever recurring Lord's Day, her days opening and closing with a season of communion with this blessed Saviour ; and here was a woman of mature years, to whom it was all new ; to whom she, a little child, was revealing it step by step, and to whose darkened mind it came but dimly, the eyes of whose spirit seemed to see only, " men, as trees walking."

Thanks be to God, that led by the little child, there is hope that she was taken out of the darkness of this spiritual night into the perfect day, and rested beneath the healing rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Of what infinite value in a home is a holy picture. Words can never impress a scene or a truth on the heart of a child, as does the fixed representation before its eyes every day, if so be that the picture is a good and reverent

one; and the memory of such a window of Heaven upon the walls of the early home, may be a guiding and preserving star through life.

This poor woman at last became so ill, that she needed constant care and could not be left any longer alone, and she was removed some distance away to the home of her son, where, after months of bitter suffering, she died.

It was the privilege of the writer to minister to her during her last days. She was still very ignorant, but humble and patient, and I never saw her that she did not talk of "that blessed child." It was the one unfulfilled wish of her heart, that she might look upon her face once more before she passed away. She seemed to apprehend the atonement of the Saviour, to put her trust fully in His merits, and to be truly and sincerely penitent for the short-comings and sins of her life.

Anything that I read to her, that she recognized as having been heard before from Loula's lips, would light up her wasted features. She had a sweet saintly old face, that must have been beautiful in her youth. She was very fond of the hymn "Rock of Ages," and I read

it to her often. She was to have received the Holy Communion the next day after I paid her my last visit, but ere the day dawned, the Lord had called her away. We trust she is one of those who will drink new wine with Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom.

Her funeral was a sad one. It was held in the parish church. Only a few present, a rainy day, with thunder continually muttering in the distance. As she had been led to the Saviour's feet by a little child, it was meet that a little child's voice, a clear, pure boy's soprano, should sing over her remains, her favorite "Rock of Ages," and it seemed like a song of triumph as the tones rang out so tenderly and so full of expression.

"'Rock of ages, cleft for me,'
Sung above a coffin lid,
Underneath all restfully
All life's joys and sorrows hid.

Never more, O storm-tossed soul,
Never more from wind and tide,
Never more from billows' roll,
Wilt thou need thyself to hide.

Could the sightless, sunken eyes,
Closed beneath the soft gray hair,
Could the mute and stiffened lips
Move again in pleading prayer—
Still, aye still, the words would be,
'Let me hide myself in Thee.'"

As we stood at the grave, while the holy office of the Church was being said, a fierce thunder storm broke over us, and the noise of the thunder mingled with that of the falling rain, was louder than the rector's voice. There she lies, sleeping upon an eastern slope in the God's-acre, her face turned toward the rising sun, and we trust that her ransomed spirit will be a star in dear Loula's crown of rejoicing, for all eternity.

In the autumn of 1873, another baby brother was added to the household group. When the little girls were taken in to see the new comer, they were greatly astonished; Loula was deeply affected, but as soon as she could speak, she said, "Mother, we will bring *this* boy up right, we will bring him up for God." And faithfully did both little sisters strive for that end. They taught him, constantly, such

things as they could to help him to be a good child, and always told him over and over, that he was Jesus' little lamb. They loved him and prayed for him, and were so much delighted with his innocent baby ways.

In the summer of 1875, the writer spent several weeks at the old mansion. In daily intercourse with these little children, I learned to love them very dearly, although they had long lain near my heart; still I saw more of them, and could study their simple every-day life, and understand their characters as I had never been able to do before. Loula was the most brave, practical and helpful of the two; Bessie the most imaginative. Both were gentle, obedient and affectionate.

They always met me when I came out of my room in the morning, so cheerfully, with freshly-gathered flowers and a sweet greeting. I used frequently to take them both, and with a book, perhaps, in my hand, go out in the graveyard and sit down there to read and think. They would play about me quietly, gathering flowers or grasses, and reading the inscriptions on the tombstones.

Loula once called my attention to a little stone, and I read thereon the name of

"Elizabeth Lenoir,
Daughter of William Lenoir,
Born Feb. 15th, 1783,
Died March 22nd, 1785."

She said, "This baby has lain here a long time."

I replied, "Yes, Loula, ninety years ; and its spirit has been ninety years in Paradise."

She gazed thoughtfully upon the turf-clad mound for a few moments, and then asked, "Do you think she has grown old there, or is she a little baby yet ?"

I saw how her mind had grasped the two facts — that of the tiny body lying here in the little grave at our feet, so small, "only a foot or two at most of star-daisied sod," and the lapse of ninety years, which must seem such a long period to the ideas of a child, connecting with it the thought of a person ninety years of age ; and it was indeed a perplexing problem for the youthful intellect. We sat down then under a cedar tree, and talked a

long time about the blessed dead in Paradise, and of their continual progression without age or decay of faculties, and I was struck with the ready comprehension she evinced, not saying very much, but drinking in all I said on the subject with a clearness of perception, as I could realize from her few remarks and answers to the questions put to her, that gratified me very much.

She also assisted me in making a copy of the epitaph from Gen. Lenoir's tomb-stone, which is already recorded in these pages. The marble has crumbled and the edges of the letters worn off, so that they have become very illegible. We had to go out in the bright sunshine to decipher them, and she took great interest in tracing them with her finger and spelling out for me w r l after word.

She was a very companionable child, and without impressing one with the least idea of precociousness or forwardness, she would, in an unassuming way, prove herself excellent company even to a grown person.

On a walk she saw everything that was beautiful; wild flowers, a richly tinted leaf, a shin-

ing stone, the lichens upon the rocks, the minnows and darting bugs upon the water; all the varied objects and incidents gave her so much pleasure, and she spoke of them so intelligently.

One of the pets of the plantation was "Old Button." He was an Indian pony, a short, stout-built animal with a shaggy mane, that had formerly been the property of Loula's grandfather. He was in his ripe old age, good-natured and faithful, and he afforded the little girls much amusement.

They would go to the stable and bring him out themselves, lead him to the block, put a sheep-skin across his back, then both mount him, and away they would go down to the river bank to give him drink. They would crawl over him and under him, tumble about and frolic with him, laughing merrily without a thought of fear.

As "The Fort" is five miles or more from the post-office, it is the custom of the good cousin who lives at "Palmyra," the fine old homestead of Gen. P——, when he sends for his own mail, to bring that for "The Fort," as

far as his house, which is about half way, and it is sent for there. Loula used often in pleasant weather to go up for it on Old Button.

The quaint little maiden with a riding-skirt over her dress, a white sun-bonnet on, and a calico bag hanging on the horn of the saddle, would ride off quietly, fording the Yadkin on the way, and, after making a call, looking at her cousin's flowers, or any other object of interest that the time might present, return with the papers and letters in the bag, enjoying her ride of four or five miles so much.

Old Button became useless the last year of his life, but he was well cared for until he departed, full of years and of honors, on the 21st of October, 1876, in the thirty-first year of his age.

In the spring of 1875, when Bessie was entering her seventh year, it was judged advisable to send her to school. It seemed almost cruel to make the shrinking, timid child go away from home, and from her mother, and stay all day with strangers, but it was doubtless just what she needed to counteract these peculiarities and to cultivate a degree of self-

reliance in her. Loula took such good care of her, and did everything to encourage her, still it came very hard.

One morning I remember they started off, Bessie going very unwillingly, after we had talked to her of the beauty of being a "school-girl," and tried to make the school-room seem attractive to her. Soon Loula returned alone, with a very troubled face, telling her mother that Bessie was sitting down by the creek crying; that she could not induce her to tell her what for, or to go any farther. She was told to go and bring her back, which she did. When she came in she rushed to her mother and threw her arms about her neck, saying:

"Mother, I am not a naughty girl, but I was just thinking if anything happened to you or the baby while I was away, what should I do, and I could not go on." And she sobbed passionately.

The mother's eyes filled with tears, and it would only have been obeying the dictates of her yearning heart, if she had given up to the feeling, and kept the trembling little creature at her side; but she felt that it was a decisive

moment, and after soothing her somewhat, she firmly compelled her to go on with her sister to school.

She came home in the evening very bright and cheerful, and yielded the succeeding days quietly to the necessity laid upon her, though I often observed a sigh, and a looking back as if she fain would stay by "mother and the baby," if she could be allowed to do so.

Her imagination was vivid, and I noticed that in her little plays she seemed to make the childish pretences strong realities. Loula was not without a fanciful vein in her character, but the dividing line between fact and fancy was more clearly defined in her mind, and the "make believes" never became as real to her as to her little sister.

I heard the child sobbing out in the porch one day, and fearing she was hurt, went out to comfort her. On asking,

"Bessie, what is the matter?" she said — "Mother has killed my baby."

This was all she would tell me, but Loula came and explained, that she had made a baby for Bess by tying a string around the

end of the cradle pillow, and dressing it up in the soiled clothes of the little brother; that Bessie had rocked it to sleep in the cradle and left it while she went in the garden for a time. During her absence her mamma, in gathering up the wash for the servant, had taken the clothes off the pillow, shaken it up and put it in its place; and when the child returned to the cradle she found her play broken up. At once she commenced crying, with the exclamation: "Mother has killed my baby!" and—Loula said—refused to be comforted. She was not in any way out of temper about it, but seemed perfectly heart-broken, and only wept the more as we tried to divert her mind to other things. At last her auntie took her away upstairs, where she sobbed herself to sleep. As she grew older this sensitiveness was in a measure overcome; she was more uniformly cheerful, less shy, and enjoyed everything so much. She became plump and rosy and graceful, and the two little sisters were very happy together.

They were quite a contrast in personal appearance as well as in character.

Loula was a perfect blonde. Very fair hair, straight and fine and soft as silk ; a complexion of pearly whiteness, upon which the rosy tints were like the hues of her own beloved blush-roses. Her eyes were light blue, wide, very wide open, clear as a mountain lake, with an expression of honest frankness in them, toned down at times by a far-off, dreamy look, as shades of thought passed over her mind, but always looking square at one when she spoke or was being spoken to. Her figure was healthily developed, and the atmosphere surrounding her was restful and cheerful.

Bessie had brown hair, soft, wavy and abundant. Her eyes were an undefined gray, over which the long dark lashes always cast a shadow. Her complexion was pure and waxen, and her expression pensive and very sweet. In feature she was the most beautiful of the two, and her whole air was one of tenderness and grace.

For years Loula sat as the little priestess at the table to call down the blessing of God upon the family meals. The duty was performed

with grave and reverent earnestness. She used several forms, varying as she desired, some of them in verse :

> "Be present at our table, Lord,
> Be here and every where adored ;
> These creatures bless, and grant that we
> May feast in Paradise with Thee."

And,—

> "We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food,
> And more because of Jesus' blood ;
> Let manna to our souls be given,
> The Bread of Life, sent down from Heaven."

Or,—

> "Come, good Lord, and be our Guest,
> What Thou hast given, by Thee be blest."

The spirit of prayer really lived in these little children. Bessie was particularly a child of prayer. She was never satisfied until she had been with her mother to the place where it was their custom to retire for devotion, and after the sacred obligation had been performed, she would seem so happy, and go singing away. Not long before the close of her life she went with her mother several miles from home to visit some relatives. In the hurry of getting

off at an early hour, the morning prayers together were neglected; but as soon as they reached their destination, and the greetings were over, she came and whispered, "Mother, let us go and say our prayers; we did not say them this morning." And she could not be satisfied until they had sought a place of retirement and offered up the usual supplications to the Heavenly Father's throne. Then, with His benediction on her youthful head, she was ready to enter into the enjoyment of the visit.

And how they loved the Church services, the dear voices joining clearly in the responses, while their whole demeanor was so reverent and attentive.

But the simple tale of the beautiful life-journey is drawing to a close. It was all brightness to the end.

On Friday, the 31st day of August, 1877, the darlings came home from school for the last time—ah, who could know that it *was* the last time—that all life's lessons were learned, and earth's schooling done?

Saturday morning, Sept. 1st, Loula said,

"Mother, we have been in school all the week, and now we must have this whole day to play with our dolls, can't we?"

Having the mother's hearty assent, they skipped off so delighted. How that mother's heart was touched, when, weeks after, she gathered courage to go into that doll-room, where everything remained just as they had left it at evening after that happy play-day, only a mother who has been herself bereaved can understand. They had quantities of rag dolls, made by their own deft little fingers, and had families arranged in various positions. The garments they had been making on that Saturday lay there with the needles at the last stitch—how unutterably sad the sight to poor human weakness! —but sweet the thought that the last day was one of such innocent pleasure.

The sun went down. The little feet had finished their journey, and would no more be stained with the dust of earth. They were treading in that solemn border land, upon the verge of the purple shadow, but all eyes were holden.

The week closed as other weeks. No sound

was on earth or in air to warn of the events of the week to come.

The good-nights were spoken, the kisses given, the evening prayers said, and the children and the household slept.

The angels were setting the golden gates ajar; the ministering spirits were receiving their commissions to stand by the bed of suffering; loving ones in paradise were in expectant waiting, to welcome to their midst two more redeemed; but in the old home in the Happy Valley, untouched by apprehension or by fear, the children and the household slept.

"God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols; and albeit
He brake them to our faces, and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white—
I know we shall behold them raised, complete—
The dust swept from their beauty—glorified,
New memnons singing in the great God light."

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

"So oft the doing of God's will
Our foolish wills undoeth!
And yet what idle dream breaks ill
Which morning light subdueth?
And who would murmur and misdoubt
When God's great sunrise finds him out?"

THE morning of the Lord's Day broke over the mountains. That "day of rest and gladness," so full of heavenly hope and comfort. Countless voices had been raising up the prayer, in the far east, and repeated o'er and o'er again as the king of day rolled on in splendor, until at last his rays tinted the tree-tops on the heights that bounded the "Happy Valley;"—that prayer so needed by this family group, upon whom a shadow, so dark as to be felt at midday, was falling. "Give them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their

afflictions; and this we ask for Jesus Christ sake. Amen."

What a blessed thought, when the day dawns upon us after a night of sorrow, that the wave of prayer that is ever encircling the earth is rolling on to meet us with the morning light, and that it is ever ceaselessly arising in our behalf. Is not that the sacred fire that ever burns before Jehovah, the lamp that never goes out? Those blessed prayers of the Holy Catholic Church for all sorts and conditions of men, rolling on in solemn grandeur, "girding earth," filling the air, until the round world is encircled as with an aureole.

The soul that in its dark hours can grasp this fact and realize itself a unit with the beseeching hosts of God's people, must surely find sweet consolation in it. It leaves no place for loneliness, for we are one with millions who are praying with and for us, and there is no moment in the cycle of the day when there is not a priest somewhere leading his people in this supplication.

And so the Lord's day morning broke. A Sabbath benediction rested upon the hills,

and the Valley wore its usual smile of peace.

The household awaked to its accustomed life, and the morning duties went on.

At the breakfast table Loula told her mother that about midnight her throat commenced feeling uncomfortable and was a little sore; but she did not complain much, and seemed very cheerful. After breakfast, however, her mother looked into her throat, and she discovered a small white speck—ah, fatal plague spot!—and told her she thought she had a small ulcer there.

She did not appear to feel very well as the morning wore on, and after lying awhile on her mother's bed, went up-stairs to her room, and did not come down to dinner. One of her brothers, who attended school at a distance, was at home, and he waited upon her so gladly, taking her dinner up to her, which she enjoyed.

Soon after, he left, as he had to return to be at school on Monday morning. He went up and kissed Loula good-bye, and took sweet Bessie in his arms, kissed her, and told her

not to get sick, and went away. What would have been his feelings if he had known he would never see their loved faces again!

Her mother continued treating her with the ordinary household remedies, and soon after the brother had gone she looked in her throat again, when she found that the speck had spread and appeared different from anything she had ever seen. Her brother Walter saw it too, and at once insisted upon going for the doctor. He saddled his horse and started for the nearest physician, who lived ten miles away, over the mountain. While he was gone she coughed up the membrane and seemed to a great extent relieved.

Bessie played with the baby brother most of the day, and about nightfall she told her mother with tears in her eyes that she felt very badly, and her throat was sore.

When the doctor came, in the evening, he did not seem to be alarmed about them, and quieted the mother when she expressed her fears that it was diphtheria. Walter was soon taken with similar symptoms, and he prescribed for all three.

At midnight Bessie's symptoms became aggravated. She suffered very much from nausea, and her throat was so painful, but she was perfectly meek and submissive. She allowed her throat to be washed, and took very bitter medicine uncomplainingly. None saw one sign of impatience or heard one murmur during her illness.

All day Monday she talked and noticed everything. In the morning and in the evening she asked, "Mother, let's say our prayers." She seemed to enjoy the devotions so much and was peaceful and satisfied in them. The mother having slept none the night before, left the children in care of the rest of the family and went to bed on Monday night. During the night the disease made rapid progress upon Bessie. When her mother came down to her in the morning she saw it, and felt almost paralyzed with the fear that her gentle little darling was indeed going from her.

She mopped out the poor swollen throat, which painful operation the child endured so patiently, gave her the bitter medicine, which

she took willingly, and then with a sweet smile came that touching refrain—

"Now, mother, let's say our prayers."

She repeated distinctly the prayers herself, saying every word after her mother, and then was comforted and lay quietly suffering while the poor mother's heart was well nigh breaking.

She dared not rebel—

> "But she must weep,
> As her pale placid martyr sinks to sleep,
> Teaching so well and silently,
> How at the Shepherd's call the lamb should die."

All day Monday Loula was getting on quite well, though her symptoms were more alarming from the first than her little sister's. She was bright and cheerful, and so loving to all about her, thankful for every little kindness and attention, and so troubled that she could not be up and helping the rest.

On Tuesday morning, when the condition of the little one became hopeless, her mother thought it best to tell her of it, deeming it better that she should know the sorrow as it developed, than to keep her in ignorance of

the facts, and have her unprepared for what she saw must follow; so on Tuesday, when she asked after Bessie, she told her, "Bessie is worse."

Loula replied—

"Oh, precious mother, I am sure that sweet Bessie is ready to die, for last Friday morning as we lay in our little bed, she put her arms around my neck and told me she did not think she would stay here much longer."

Her mother asked—

"Darling, do you think she wanted to die?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, "she said she wanted to go to Heaven."

During Tuesday morning little Bessie failed rapidly, and her utterance was much obstructed. Near noontide, just before she became speechless, again, and for the last time, she said, "Mother, let us go round to the other house and say our prayers."

She desired to go to the wonted place where their daily devotions were offered up. Her mother reminded her that God was right at her side, and could hear her as well there as elsewhere, and she was content. This call to prayer

were the last words she spoke; she remained speechless, though for a time conscious.

A little while before she breathed her last, the stricken mother went up-stairs to see Loula. When she started to come down again, Loula said—

"Dear mother, tell Bessie good-bye for me."

The Holy Comforter surely supported her as she went down to her bedside, and asked the precious child, if she knew her mother. The little sufferer opened her eyes and gazed upon her, and then she told her that Loula wished her to tell her "good-bye"—and she knelt down and asked the Heavenly Father to receive the departing spirit; and was then compelled to leave the room, after which she saw her no more alive.

Oh, the blessed power and strength of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, that could support this timid, shrinking child, and lead her on so calmy and trustingly down into the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death! Strong men, old Christians, looked on wonderingly to see this little one, all conscious of her condition, leaving her earth-life, and all that had made

that life so intensely dear, leaving home and mother, and all to which she had clung with such tenacity, without a murmur, going out to the spirit world so fearlessly. It was the lamb reclining on the Good Shepherd's bosom, as He bore it safely through the darkness to the green pastures of the Better Land.

Just before she passed away, she looked steadily, and for a moment affrightedly behind the bed, as if she saw something which terrified her, and then she pulled up the bed clothes over her face. Her papa drew them away, and when she looked up again, she seemed to see only a vision of beauty, for her face fairly shone with exstatic delight, and the rapturous smile remained upon the marble face until it was hidden from mortal view.

And so the gentle spirit fled, peacefully, leaving the very impress of heavenly joy, the earnest of answered prayers, upon her countenance, at five o'clock on Tuesday evening, September 4th.

During Tuesday night Loula became desperately ill. She had been impressed with the idea from the first that she would never recover, but

now it seemed to be revealed to her as a certainty. She was suffering fearfully, her throat swelling both sides, and she told her cousin, who was nursing her, that she would surely die; but they tried to keep her from talking about it.

Wednesday morning, she said, "Cousin Lou, I am going to die. God has told me so."

"How, darling?"

"He has made me know it."

"Well, Loula, if God should call you away, would you be willing to go?"

She quietly folded her hands and replied with great earnestness, "*Perfectly.*"

Presently, raising up in bed, she asked, "Have I been too wicked?" When her cousin assured her that Christ could forgive *all* sin, she rejoined, "Dear Jesus, if He will take me, I am ready to go." She also said, soon after: "Cousin Lou, I have seen a beautiful angel with a face like my mother's, and it wanted me to go to Heaven to live;" and then, with wide open eyes and in a whisper, she added, "and it wants Bess too." And again she said, "I saw

cousin Carrie (a cousin who had been dead for some time), and oh, I loved her so much!" she asked for her father, and after expressing the most tender affection for him, told him, "Dear papa, I am going to die, and I want to tell you what to put on my tombstone. "We love him because He once loved us."

The family could not bear to think of giving her up. The sweet, frail Bessie had always seemed a blossom more fitted for the airs of Paradise than for this rough storm-tossed world, and it had been a familiar thought with many that she might be early called away; but Loula, so strong, so brave, so cheerful and helpful, for her, nothing but a life of loving usefulness was expected. No one ever imagined she might die. They could not give her up. Her cousin said—

"But Loula, we hope you are not going to die; be willing to live to comfort your mother."

"Yes," she replied, "I would be a comfort to my mother, and I might help another soul to Heaven; but if I should grow up wicked I should be sorry I did not die now."

After a while she asked, "Can't my mother come to me? I want my mother to come and pray for me."

Her dear mother came, so frail and weak, but supported by Divine help to a state of wonderful calmness. Loula held out her arms, with a bright smile upon her face, saying—

"Oh, my precious mother, I do love you so much! You are so dear to me." And then she asked three times how dear little Bessie was, not knowing that the spirit had been the night before released from the suffering clay. The physician advised that she should not be told of it. At last her mother said, "We hope she is better."

Loula looked at her, and said with marked emphasis—

"Oh, precious mother, I am *sure* I saw Bessie in Heaven last night. I saw her *twice*."

Then very calmly, and with a bright smile on her face—

"Precious mother, I want to talk some with you now. I think I am going to die; the angels have told me so, and precious, darling mother, God promised me last night that you

should come to me, and that darling papa should come, and He promised me that all, every one of the dear boys should come. Tell Gwyn, (Gwyn was the brother who was away at school, and not allowed to come home, his tonsils being so large the disease was thought to be particularly dangerous for him), to be a faithful soldier ; that God has promised me he should come."

She then asked her mother to forgive her any trouble she might have caused her, also called her faithful "Aunt Sade," who had been a second mother to both the little girls, and asked her forgiveness. They both assured her that they had nothing to forgive, that she had only been a comfort and a blessing to them.

The family physician who had watched her with loving interest, gave her some ice. She took it and said, "Oh, this is so good ; it refreshes me so much. How good of God to give us ice, and to give us such friends, but best of all to give us Himself." She thanked the doctor for his care and attention, and said, "You have all been so kind to me, and helped

me very much, but Jesus has helped me more than all."

A few moments afterward he saw her looking upward so intently, and with such a luminous face, he asked, "Loula, what are you looking at?" She replied, "I see a beautiful angel. It is looking at me, and it is so beautiful."

The ice was such a great comfort to her, that she begged her papa that he would *always* put up ice and keep it for the sick and fevered *for her sake.* He made a promise to her that he would do so, and it has been religiously kept. The sick from all about the country send to him for ice, and it is dispensed freely, in memoriam. So that although she has passed from earth, she is still holding the cup of cold water to many a parched lip

Her mother begged her not to talk ; told her that the doctor feared it would injure her, and that he wanted her to try and go to sleep. But she said, "Oh, mother, God shows me such beautiful things that I cannot sleep ; but if you will say a prayer for me, and get close to me, I will try."

And so she did sleep a little while, and then,

opening her clear spiritual eyes, and gazing on her mother, she said, while the very "radiancy of glory," seemed to be reflected on her sweet face, and speaking as if she were already in the land of the blest:

"Come to me, my precious mother, lean your tired head upon my bosom and rest. I told you that God said you should come. And there comes darling papa, coming straight on, and there is Gwyn marching on like a brave soldier, and there is Walter." A look of pain crossed her bright angelic face, then brightening up again, she called so sweetly, "Come on, Walter;" and with a smile, "don't you see him coming? Dear mother, Tommie has been sorely tempted, but he is coming right on now, and sweet little Rufus too; he is coming, darling mother, did I not tell you that God had promised me you should all come?"

This was no delirium, no result of morphia or other drugs. She had taken nothing to affect her brain, and was in a condition of perfect reason and consciousness, but one of exstatic exaltation.

Her sympathy for all the family, and es-

pecially for her mother, in what they were enduring, was intense. Looking up at her mother, she exclaimed, "Your face is like an angel's, mother, sitting there so calm and sweet, but there is a terrible battle raging within."

At another time she put her arms around her mother's neck, saying, "Oh, precious mother, I love you more than all the world, but I love Jesus more." When her papa left her bedside weeping, she said, "Darling papa, he is so good, I know he will go to heaven.

She spoke again and again of the lovely angel with a face like her mother's. "I love her better," she said, "than all the angels, and I call her my mother angel. I believe now," kissing her hand, "I love my earthly mother just a little better, but Jesus I love better than all."

Her mother suggested that this angel might be her aunt Lizzie, the "Mrs. C." already referred to, who since the time of that visit to E—— had passed away, but she said: "No, mother, it was *you*. I've seen my auntie

twice, and I knew her; she gave me a sweet smile but she did not speak."

It was a singular coincidence that her mother had an older sister who died before Loula's birth, who was remarkably like herself.

At one time, speaking of herself and Bessie, while eating some grape juice, she said, "We will miss all the grapes;" and, after a pause, "We will miss *God's work!*"

She also called out to an untaught girl, who was nurse to the little brother, "Margaret, you must come; *get your crutches* and come on."

Her sufferings continued great, and she said, "Mother, last night I murmured against God, but I have prayed for forgiveness, and He has granted it, and I am so happy."

Once, as in Bessie's case, a shadow of fear came over her as she looked in a darkened corner, and asked her papa who that dark man was. Can it be that the tempter dared make an effort to approach these darlings?

Stopping in the midst of a sentence as she was talking, she raised her hands as in adora-

tion, and her face was almost transfigured. Those whose privilege it was to be present, say it was unearthly and indescribable in its radiant loveliness. Her whole frame was quivering with an exstasy of joy, as she called out:

"Look! Precious mother, don't you see him?"

"Who, darling?"

"Jesus! Jesus! I do wish you could see him. *I did not know anything could be so lovely!* Oh, I love him more than anything else!"

In this she was firm. No matter how much they tried to entice her back to a wish for life and a consideration for human ties, the burden of the answer was always the same, to the effect that they were all inexpressibly dear to her, but that "Jesus" was dearest and loveliest of all things.

As this sorrowful Wednesday wore on, the dread disease gained the complete mastery, and it was evident that the end was near. In the afternoon her mother came into the room, and she said to her with joyful expression of voice and smiling face, cheerfully, as if she

would fain comfort and strengthen her in the assurance :

"Dear mother, I am dying !"

"Well, my darling, you are not afraid to die."

"Oh, no."

"You love the Saviour."

"Yes, yes."

Later her sufferings increased, and at intervals her mind began to wander, but she always responded to her mother's voice. When her mother said to her, "Darling, do you know me?" she replied, speaking with great difficulty, "Why, I would know my precious mother anywhere."

When her aunt bent over her, she said, "Aunt Sadie, move a little and let me see those beautiful things."

Even in her last hours, she was always glad to hear the name of Jesus, and showed her love for Him as long as she could.

At one time she imagined she was down by the river, where she had been going to school, and she said, "I will go home now, it is getting dark. I cannot see my lessons any longer, but

now I have only *these crosses* to learn." Again she said, "Open the gate and let me go through; will no one open the gate?"

"I want to go home, but can't walk," she said, and rising up in the bed, she threw herself upon her papa's bosom, begging, piteously, "Oh papa, take me home."

They talked soothingly to her, and her cousin offered her a drink of water. She said softly, "I will drink out of the river now."

"But dear, this is sweet, cool water; will you not have some?"

"No," she said, "Cousin Lou, I will drink out of the river now."

When the agony was so sharp, she exclaimed, "Oh, this suffering! But what is this suffering when compared to that glory?"

She had not been told of Bessie's death, but she seemed perfectly aware of it, and never talked of her as if they were to be separated. Just before the end she sprang up in the bed, and on her knees, held out both her hands, exclaiming rapturously, "Oh, there is Bessie! I see her now, right *there*," pointing as she spoke to an open window.

Soon the light went out from her eyes, and the struggle was over. She murmured, "Bessie, Bessie, pretty, pretty," and the loving heart ceased to beat, the gentle voice was still, while the old clock recorded the hour—half-past ten!

"Slowly across the dark night sky,
A crowd of white angels are passing by;
Like a fleet of swans they float along,
On the silver notes of a dying song.

Like a cloud of incense their pinions rise,
Fading away up the purple skies,
But hush! for the silent glory is stirred,
By a strain such as earth has never heard."

"We bring Thee back Thine own, O Lord,
Rescued from earth and sin,
O Paradise! Thy pearly portals ope
And let these precious spirits in.

We bring these earth flowers sweet,
O Saviour, to Thy feet,
In each one pure and undefiled,
Behold thy child."

Thursday morning, September 6th, dawned upon a heart broken family. Such a few days, and "so much gone." The joy and pride of

the household sleeping in marble beauty, and a stillness of painful intensity brooding over all.

They were laid side by side in the "little back room" looking like two angels, under their long white veils and amid fair flowers.

"That life is long that answers life's great end,"

and although they were like flowers nipped in the bud, still their lives appear, as we look back at them now, so rounded and complete, that it does not seem as if their passing away was in any sense premature.

They had done "God's work," indeed, both in their lives and in their deaths, and they are victors now, through Him that loved us.

"Little hands we sought to hold,
Crossed upon that bosom cold,
You had blessed work to do;
God has led us all by you;
Childhood's faith had made its sign;
Jesus stooped with love divine,
And so sweet a look and tone,
That the children followed on.

Ah, dear Lord, how could we know
Thou would'st lure our darlings so ?
Yet amid our tears and pain,
We would not win them back again."

On Thursday afternoon they were carried by tender hands to their rest. The Holy Office of the Church was said, the dust to dust was given, and they were laid down in one grave. It is in the old grave yard, near the feet of their grandparents, and in the same row of little mounds in which is the one before spoken of, over which the summer's sun and winter's frost and cold, have alternated for more than ninety years.

A beautiful monument of Italian marble is reared above their resting-place. It is surmounted by the Cross, the symbol of that Jesus, in whom they triumphed over death, which also bears the circle, the emblem of that perfect eternity upon which they have entered.

Upon the face of the monument is cut two wreaths, linked together; Loula's wreath of lilies, Bessie's of rose buds. The names of "Loula" and "Bessie" are beneath the wreaths.

Then comes the following inscription:

"Laid down to sleep together,
Sept. 6th 1877."

"They were lovely and pleasant
In their lives, and in their deaths
They were not divided."

On the reverse is, their full baptismal names and ages, with these words:

"Beholding the King in His beauty."

On Loula's end:
"Loula said, put these words on my tombstone:

'We love Him because He first loved us.'"

"With Him in Paradise."

On Bessie's side, these words:

"Our Bessie's voice
Is hushed in prayer,
And changed to songs,
Where angels are.
Hallelujah!"

Sleeping there in the quiet Valley, we must

leave the mortal part, and let our thoughts and desires follow their spirits to the land of light and life, where, with the loved and radiant ones who ministered to them on their dying beds, they await in rest and peace the joyful resurrection.

"How good of God, to halve the lot,
And give them all the sweetness;
To us the empty room and cot,
To them the heavens' completeness.

"To us this grave, to them the rows
The mystic palm trees spring in,
To us the silence in the house,
To them the choral singing."

The caviller at God's truth must stand abashed before such a revelation of spiritual might as this! What but a divine power could uphold such children, and make them full of a courage, not of earth, to meet the King of Terrors, and meeting him, to find the sting of death removed, and only a path of light opening before their feet as they pass down into the Valley of the Shadow?

What but a divine power could strengthen

the "Sweet Mother," that her faith failed not, and she has been enabled to say, "It is well."

It was indeed "a glimpse of glory," an incitement to continued struggle toward the gates of day, into which they passed from mortal sight.

The circumstances of their deaths has already exerted a strong influence, and a revival of spiritual life has sprung up in many a heart that loved them.

The nurse girl, Margaret, has been led to ask, "when Loula said for me to 'get my crutches,' and come on, did she not mean *that I needed something to help me;* cannot I be baptized and made a member of Christ's Church?"

She has been brought to *Baptism* and is now preparing for Confirmation, and through it for the reception of the Holy Eucharist. May she be enabled by these "crutches" to support her halting steps along the way of life, until she arrives at the same shining gate which has admitted them to the rest of Paradise.

The lives of God's saints, be they young or old, are the heritage of His Church, and for this reason the simple story, now ended, is told.

Also because at a time when the voice and pen of scoffers are alike busy, striving to overthrow all belief in the supernatural, and break down all faith in a world of spirits, this evidence of the Communion of Saints, and of the presence of our Divine Lord, so pure, so beautiful, so unquestioned—this death-bed testimony of two guileless-hearted, truthful, little Christians, ought to stand as a powerful refutation to all complex infidel philosophy.

The experiences of their last hours could have been no delusion. Spiritual help was indeed vouchsafed to them, and their eyes were opened, as in the case of the servant of Elijah upon the mountain (2 Kings vi. 16, 17), that they might see the glory that surrounded them.

Only humble souls, that have in Christ Jesus become like little children can hope for a similar blessing, and for it our Holy Mother Church bids all within Her fold to pray, as on the "Holy Innocents Day."

"O Almighty God, who out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their

deaths; mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith, even unto death, we may glorify thy Holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

And again, on the feast of "St. Michael and all Angels:"

"O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant that as thy holy angels always do Thee service in Heaven, so, by thy appointment, they may succor and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."



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